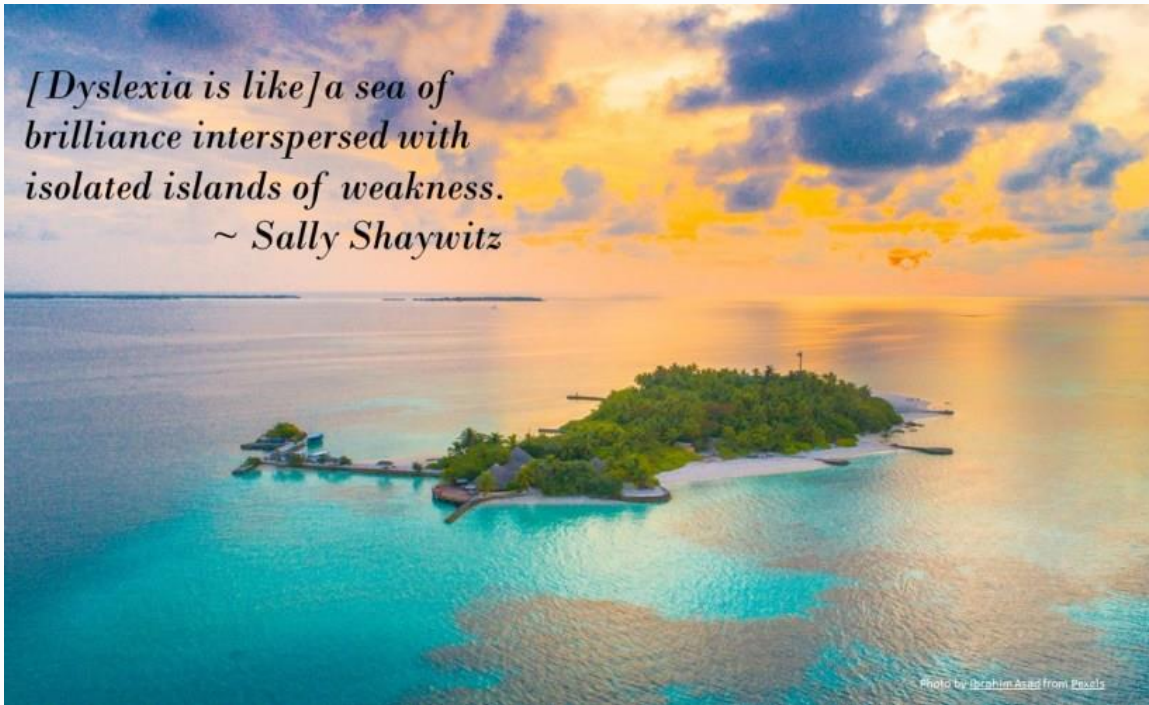


DYSLEXIA: SEA OF BRILLIANCE

MARCH 30, 2019

*[Dyslexia is like] a sea of
brilliance interspersed with
isolated islands of weakness.*

~ Sally Shaywitz



This description of dyslexia by Sally Shaywitz is excellent! So often it is too easy to get caught up in all the seemingly simple things that are so difficult for someone with dyslexia. Particularly with a child struggling to read, which is such a critical skill in the elementary years, many parents and teachers focus only on the problems and miss all the great strengths (sea of brilliance) the child also exhibits. Not only do the parents and teachers focus on the weaknesses, the child will also focus more on what they can't do than what they can do. Everyone loses perspective, and it is devastating to the child's self-confidence and self-esteem.

When you're naturally good at something, arts, logic, sports, dance, mechanics, electronics, social skills, etc. it doesn't seem like that big of a deal because it comes easily to you and you assume it is the same for everyone else. It's important to look for those strengths in your child, point out those strengths to them, and also remind your child that those things don't come easily to

everyone. A standard line in our house was something along the lines of, "Everyone will struggle with something in life. You found your struggle early with reading (spelling, writing, math, whatever) and we'll help you overcome it. Once you overcome it, you'll be able to tackle any other struggles you meet in life because you've learned how to work at it. But don't forget, some of the other things you find easy and come naturally to you are a real struggle for someone else. Don't brush them off because they are easy for you. Those are your strengths!"

By pointing out their strengths regularly, encouraging them to figure out how to use those strengths to help them learn, the islands of weakness that cause so much frustration will be kept in their proper perspective. Helping your child to understand that everyone has weaknesses they need to work on, but not all of those weaknesses show up in school, also helps them to not be so hard on themselves for having dyslexia. As a parent, it is also good to consciously look for your child's strengths to make sure you are also keeping everything in perspective, and making sure your conversations with your child are balanced between their strengths and their challenges. It's a team approach. Your child needs to know that you are working with them, supporting them, and can see them as much more than someone who struggles to read.

<https://beatofadifferentdrum.com/2019/03/30/dyslexia-sea-of-brilliance/>